Miniſterial Influence Unconſtitutional.

OR, THE

Miſchiefs of Public Venality.

——hic vivimus ambitioſa
Paupertate omnes : quid te moror ? OMNIA Romæ
Cum pretio. JUV. Sat. 3.

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Miniſterial Influence, Unconſtitutional.

WHoever conſiders the force of habit, either in a phyſical or moral ſenſe, will not be ſurprized at the extreme pertinacity, with which old ſyſtems and opinions are adhered to; cuſtom exerciſes ſo ſevere a tyranny o'er the minds of men, that many principles and practices, big with miſchief and abſurdity, are at length patiently ſubmitted to, which had they been at firſt propoſed in their naked and undiſguiſed deformity, would have excited the juſteſt indignation and abhorrence.—The greateſt abuſes, into which mankind have fallen, have ſilently and im-

perceptibly ſtole upon the world; and cuſtom, that lethargy of the ſoul, has almoſt irrecoverably chained men to thoſe abuſes, which vice and indolence firſt introduced.

Perhaps no taſk is more ungrateful or more difficult than to diſpute received opinions: vanity and intereſt are inſtantly alarmed, and indolence and timidity ſhudder at the apprehenſion of novelty.—Hence it is that ſchemes of reformation are uſually treated with neglect and deriſion; and ſhould even the propoſer, by the native light of truth be able to convince the underſtanding, he will ſeldom enjoy that rare felicity of having determined the will. He will, for the moſt part, be obliged to take ſhelter in conſcious virtue, from the ſtorms of power and intereſt, the ſneer of folly, and the contempt of ignorance, and conſole himſelf by the purity of his intentions for the ill ſucceſs of his repreſentations.

Truths

Truths would you teach, or ſave a ſinking land,
All fear, none aid you, and few underſtand.

A voluptuous people are always averſe to the fatigue of thinking; with ſuch it is a ſufficient reaſon why any ſyſtem ſhould be continued, merely becauſe it is eſtabliſhed. They do not ſo much mean ill, as, to ſpeak properly, have no meaning at all, and become the bubbles of thoſe who have worſe deſigns, and the dupes of their own moderation. Sordid, narrow ſpirits are frightened at every ſhadow of difficulty. Every thing is indeed impoſſible to him, who conſiders it as ſuch; but would men once ſet about what is evidently practicable for them, they would ſoon find thoſe imaginary obſtacles to be the mere ſpectres of terror and ignorance.

They who are incapable of extending their views, always deſire to preſerve things in their old channel; not conſidering that by a tacit acquieſcence, we conceal the ſecret and gradual advances

of evil, and obſtruct the neceſſary remedy, till the diſeaſe becomes incurable.—Such as find their account in the continuation of any ſyſtem, however pernicious, will neceſſarily exert all that keeneſs of ſpirit, which private intereſt inſpires, to ridicule and depreciate all efforts towards reformation. We have thought it thus neceſſary to lay before the reader, the difficulties ariſing from habit and prejudice, from intereſt and vanity, from luxury and indolence, with an intention to preſerve his mind unbiaſſed, as far as may be, in the diſcuſſion of our preſent queſtion, being aſſured, that we have much more to fear from prejudice than argument in the examination of the point before us.

Notwithſtanding the many diſcouragements abovementioned, no virtuous citizen can behold with indifference a pernicious ſyſtem of adminiſtration.—He may perhaps be able to mitigate

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that evil, he cannot remove, and by a ſeaſonable repreſentation excite the vigilance of his country to guard againſt the ruinous conſequences of a pernicious polity.——*The conducting of government by means of a miniſterial majority in parliament*, has been ſo long the practice, that it is at length become the leading political idea of this country.—The ſyſtem is openly acknowledged, its neceſſity and expediency maintained and vindicated, and whole legions of officers ready to die in defence of it.—So conſecrated is this idol in the imagination of its votaries, that, in the language of Dryden, they are,

——*in defence of it, as bold,*
As if it had been born of beaten gold.

Though we can by no means agree with the advocates for miniſterial dependence, that a ſyſtem of corruption is neceſſary to the ſubſiſtence of government, we ſhall however freely ac-

knowledge, that it is too frequently neceſſary to their *own ſubſiſtence*.—We ſhall not refuſe them all reaſonable compaſſion, providing they do not expect our concurrence.—An implicit ſubmiſſion to a miniſter, and that too from the vileſt motives, is an idea much fitter for a Turkiſh divan than a free people.

There can be no ſtronger argument urged againſt ſo ſcandalous a practice, than to obſerve the baneful influence it has, on the morals and principles of its abettors.—Their conduct too plainly ſhews, that the direct tendency of their ſyſtem, is to pervert the underſtanding and pollute the conſcience ;—for perverted and debaſed they muſt be, when perſons become ſo far loſt to honour and virtue, as to avow the neceſſity of corruption.—

To judge of things by their fruits

fruits and effects has been always deemed the beſt criterion. A ſenſe of ſhame ſeldom ſurvives a ſenſe of virtue. Our adverſaries by the ſhameleſs avowal of corruption, have expoſed in the moſt glaring colours the ill effects of ſo infamous a poſition.—

A poſition ſo repugnant to the natural ſenſe of mankind, the abſurdity of which is ſo ſelf-evident, that were it not for the alarming reception it has met with unaccountably among all ranks of people, we ſhould ſtand in great need of the reader's indulgence for preſuming to detain him with any arguments in order to refute it.——It will be readily granted that a parliamentary dependence on the miniſter, is an idea quite foreign to our conſtitution, and conſequently not neceſſary to its well-being; for no meaſure can be requiſite to the ſubſiſtence of any ſcheme of polity, with which it has no natural connexion. Our anceſtors

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who with ſuch pains and induſtry gradually formed our excellent conſtitution, never once imagined that they had deviſed an imperfect and impracticable ſyſtem of government; for imperfect in the higheſt degree muſt that polity be accounted, which cannot be adminiſtered without venality and corruption.——Means theſe ſo infamous that they are incompatible with the very idea of liberty, and conſequently deſtructive of our conſtitution; the forms of which may indeed be preſerved, but ſhould ſuch maxims prevail, the ſpirit and power of it muſt be extinguiſhed. The vigour of our conſtitution reſults from the mutual independency of the parts, without which the ballance is deſtroyed.—Should a parliament unhappily be ſeduced ſo far, as merely to eccho the voice of a miniſter, the life of the conſtitution is that moment extinguiſhed. The miniſter would then become king *de facto*;

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and the form of the conſtitution would, like many other forms, ſerve only to amuſe and pacify the people.

Here I muſt obſerve, that by corrupting the virtue of parliament, liberty is more effectually endangered, than by an open and avowed abuſe of power; for in the firſt ſuppoſition it is diſarmed, and poiſoned in its very ſource, the principles and manners of its natural guardians relaxed and enervated, whereas in the ſecond, public ſpirit is alarmed, and the means and neceſſity of oppoſition more obvious and practicable.—Corruption never made a neceſſary part in any ſyſtem of government. Where the prince is abſolute, ſuch an expedient is uſeleſs, and every reader muſt know, that it has ever been the bane and deſtruction of free ſtates. ——Corruption never yet entered into the plan of any legiſlator, and has always been deemed ſo infamous, that

it has been the principal concern of all law-givers to exclude and guard againſt it.

Whatever tends to deſtroy conſcience and honeſty, muſt neceſſarily undermine government, whoſe foundations, to be ſolid, muſt be laid in private virtue and public ſpirit.——

The great imperfection of all human governments conſiſts in this, that they cannot eaſily create ſufficient virtue to execute the laws.

A ſtate may make many wiſe and uſeful ordinances, but they cannot have their deſigned effect, unleſs there is ſufficient virtue to give them due execution.——A power muſt be truſted with men, which is neceſſarily delegated through a chain of ſubordinate officers, who unleſs reſtrained by principle, will ſell that power.

power.—Is it not then evident, that to influence by money or other gratifications, has a direct tendency to inflame the evil, to which all ſtates are liable, and which all law-givers have been eminently ſtudious to prevent? So very oppoſite is corruption to the idea of all good government, that it is acknowledged by all political writers, that whenever the legiſlative part of any government, becomes more corrupt than the executive, the conſtitution muſt neceſſarily be deſtroyed.—Much more might be added, in the way of general argument, to expoſe the evil and abſurdity of ſo ſcandalous an expedient; but it is needleſs to accumulate evidence on ſo plain a point: and as nobody ever yet attempted to prove the neceſſity of corruption *a priori*; I ſhall conclude the reader ſatisfied with what has been ſaid in a ſummary way, and proceed to lay before him ſuch obſervations as are intimately

connected with the ſubject of theſe ſheets.

It were perhaps a matter of too delicate enquiry to trace minutely the origin and progreſs of parliamentary venality among ourſelves: the practice is not of very ancient date, and took its riſe in a very inglorious reign.—Its beginnings were rude and feeble, and ſcarcely perceptible till the latter times of James the Firſt; nor was the progreſs conſiderable till the worſt times of Charles the Second.—However even then its operation was partial and intermitting, and not a ſtated regular engine of government.—The times are very recent, in which corruption was digeſted into a compleat ſyſtem, and became the corner ſtone of the political fabric. —There are now living ſome who have beheld the rapid and general progreſs of this odious principle; but it is to be feared, have lived long enough,

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to have ſeen it infect not only the nobler parts, but, like blood in the animal, to pervade even the minuteſt capillary in the body politic.——That a miniſter ſhould be tempted to employ ſo vile an expedient, is not to be wondered at in the preſent depravity of man: a thirſt of power, that predominant paſſion of the ſoul, may eaſily induce him to employ any means to preſerve and extend that power, againſt all oppoſition. But that a prince ſhould ever conſult to rule by ſuch an expedient, to the diminution of his honour and juſt authority, is a matter not ſo eaſily accounted for.—The truth is, no prince ever abetted a ſyſtem of venality, but from extreme perſonal weakneſs, or becauſe he purſued in ſome points an intereſt ſeparate from that of his people.—As no man in private life ever thought it neceſſary to bribe another to induce that perſon to purſue his own intereſt, how ſhould a

prince

prince think it neceſſary to bribe a nation to purſue theirs ? A miniſter indeed who knows that corruption is the only expedient to maintain his own power, will naturally endeavour to perſuade the prince, that it is the only expedient of government. But the prince muſt be as weak, as the other is wicked, to believe him. A miniſter, who acts in this manner, in effect makes this modeſt demand——*Sire, permit me to employ your power, in order to make you my priſoner for the purpoſes of my own ambition.* Nor would this be an imaginary aſcendant acquired over the prince by the miniſter.—He would not fail upon proper occaſions to endeavour to intimidate him, by rattling the chains of a miniſterial majority.

The main drift of this pamphlet, is to ſhew (without any application to times or perſons) that a prince of ſenſe and virtue, who would make himſelf

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acquainted with buſineſs and with the characters of men, and who invariably purſued the intereſts of his people, would never have occaſion to purchaſe the mercenary concurrence of parliament thro' the channel of a miniſter, but would meet with as little contradiction in effect as the Grand Seignor.

To confirm this obſervation by fact and experience, it may be proper to look back to the times of Elizabeth. Her perſonal character was ſtained with many vices, and her life full of moral depravity; but the imperfections of the woman were obliterated to the public eye in the great qualities of the queen.—From a general conviction of her ſincere endeavours to promote the public good, ſhe met with the moſt perfect concurrence in all her meaſures. The nation was ſenſible, that ſhe purſued their common intereſt, and repaid her parental care

care with a filial affection.—Thus meriting and acquiring the unfeigned love of her people, ſhe kept her miniſters in a due ſtate of dependence, and did not purchaſe the acquieſcence of the repreſentatives of the nation, thro' the favours of a miniſter, but by the ſolid ſupport of national affection, defended herſelf from the inſolence of her own ſervants, as well as from the rage of her foreign and domeſtic enemies.——Perſonal imperfections, eſpecially in princes, are always forgiven to public virtue; but if to the virtues of the man you ſuppoſe added the great qualities of a king, the union is irreſiſtible. A people under the happy government of ſuch a prince, would reſemble a great army, ready to undertake any thing under the auſpices of a general who had deſerved their confidence.—Nay a zeal for the nation's honour has been often ſufficient to palliate in ſome degree characters of the greateſt depravation.——Cromwell, tho' an

uſurper,

uſurper, was a man of ſenſe, and well underſtood the force of this principle: after having triumph'd over his adverſaries in the field, he dazzled the nation with the ſplendor of his foreign politics.

Popularity muſt be founded on affection and eſteem, and a prince who merits that eſteem, cannot fail of being popular, and would be refuſed nothing by the parliament, becauſe he would aſk nothing, that he would be refuſed by the people.

Few people can ſhare in the favours and gratifications of the crown, but all may enjoy the bleſſing of being well governed; and it is not conceivable that a vaſt majority of a free people would ever ſuffer the good intentions of the prince to be fruſtrated by the inſolent faction of a miniſter. Suppoſing merely for the ſake of argument, that men could be found infamous enough

to attempt the obſtruction of a good government, what ſucceſs could ſuch wretches promiſe themſelves againſt the great body and general intereſt of a nation?——Even the creatures of a miniſter might well ſhudder at the thoughts of oppoſing the righteous purpoſes of a prince, ſeconded by the voice of his people.

A prince, who conſcious of his integrity can appeal with confidence to his people, and has one common intereſt with them, has nothing to fear from the intereſted oppoſition of a few particulars. Suppoſing even (what can never be ſuppoſed of a Britiſh parliament) that a majority of the repreſentatives of the people was attached to ſome factious leader; a prince in this caſe, might order a new repreſentation of his ſubjects, and the people duly informed, and eſteeming their ſovereign, as is ſuppoſed, would not fail to ſend him

him ſuch as would more faithfully repreſent them than the former had done. I have here ſuppoſed the greateſt difficulty poſſible, which indeed is moſt unlikely to happen; for let a prince withdraw his favour from an unworthy ſervant, and his power falls to the ground: for can we ſuppoſe that a great body of men, tho' under ſome private obligations, would chooſe to ſacrifice their reputation, favour of their prince, and even their moſt ſolid intereſts, to the chimerical hopes of ſupporting a miniſter who had deſervedly incurred the reſentment both of prince and people.——Evidently impoſſible. ——Let a prince by his conduct take care to deſerve well of thoſe without doors, and he has nothing to fear from within.

The main body of a nation, with whom power is ultimately lodged in every community, can have no other

intereſt but that of good government, and their affection will always prove the moſt ſolid ſupport of the authority of the prince.——The great body of a people when they ſee their general intereſt provided for, are very indifferent as to the hands, in which the prince may think proper to place his authority. —They will not preſume to dictate to him the choice of his ſervants, but, happy if the public is well ſerved, they will freely leave to him, as is their duty, the choice of the inſtruments.— They will not contend for the particular intereſts of this or that family, but for the general good of the community, that great family, of which they conſider the king as the common father.

A Britiſh ſovereign at the head of the freeſt people on earth, may derive *from himſelf* all the authority and power requiſite to his own and the nation's happineſs,

pineſs, and has no occaſion to lean on the *broken reeds* of mercenary attachment.

Nothing but national proſperity can be a national object, and conſequently a good prince may depend on national concurrence for purpoſes truly national.

If power is ultimately lodged with the majority of every people, and if it is their obvious and acknowledged intereſt to be wiſely and virtuouſly governed, it is impoſſible that the prince ſhould not be always ſtrengthened with ſufficient power to give his good intentions the ampleſt execution.

The people who by their repreſentatives make a third part in the legiſlature, have a right to be informed, and will judge concerning public affairs; and however unqualify'd they may be deemed

deemed to diſcuſs foreign politics, they are not ſuch incompetent judges, as ſome affect to ſuppoſe, of the internal adminiſtration.

The effects of a wiſe adminiſtration in the peace, induſtry, trade and morals of the ſociety, are too conſpicuous not to engage the attention, and too beneficial not to conciliate the affections of the governed.—It is impoſſible the great body of the nation ſhould ever be miſtaken concerning the virtue and vigor of the adminiſtration, nor could the rage and calumny of diſappointed faction ever induce people to relinquiſh their own proper experience.

In vain would a ſpirit of faction ever hope to contend with the legal authority of the crown; and tho' oppoſition from juſt motives, may and has exceeded its proper bounds, yet perhaps

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our hiſtory does not furniſh a ſingle inſtance, where the crown has ſuffered from an oppoſition originally ill-founded.

It is ſo much the natural inclination, as well as intereſt of all people to live well with the ſovereign, that nothing can diſturb that harmony, but the moſt notorious and cruel provocation: much leſs could the contemptible reſentments of a few individuals, whoſe diſgrace might be conſidered as a national benefit, ever warp the affection, or diminiſh the juſt confidence of the people in their ſovereign.

The truth is, all ranks of men ſufficiently reſpect the authority of the crown.—What a misfortune would it be, ſhould the crown alone be inſenſible of its own authority, and be induced to govern by weak and wretched expe-

dients,

dients, inſtead of the nobler means of national affection and public ſpirit!

The conſtitutional power of the crown is abundantly ſufficient to anſwer all purpoſes, for which power ought to be truſted, or can honeſtly be deſired. —Should we even ſuppoſe a conſiderable ſhare of that authority devolved on a miniſter, and by him exerciſed for bad ends, through worſe means, a ſmall acquaintance with modern hiſtory may enable us to judge of the weight and influence of ſuch a miniſter. If falſe maxims of government can operate thus powerfully, what might not reaſonably be expected from the true? Great and irreſiſtible would be the efforts of that people, whoſe prince was the common center of their union, which every prince may infallibly be, provided he is ſenſible of his own authority, and purſues the true ends of govern-

government.—It was the advice of that able ſtateſman, Sir William Temple, to Charles the Second, to be *the king of his people*, with whoſe affections, he aſſured him, he might compaſs every thing he wiſhed, but without them could do nothing.—The hiſtory of that prince is well known; as he abandoned the intereſts, ſo he deſervedly loſt the affections of his ſubjects.

It may be proper in this place, to take notice of ſome of the moſt popular objections that have been made to the doctrine we inculcate, which are indeed more formidable by their preſcription, than the ſolidity of their arguments.

1. It has been ſaid, that it is very hazardous to attempt any alteration, in conducting the machine of government, and that matters have gone on tolerably well on the old ſyſtem, and that new experiments may be dangerous. To which I anſwer, that the machine

of government, like other machines, unleſs its ſprings be ſeaſonably cleanſed and repaired, may very probably ſtop, and that due purgations may be as neceſſary to the political as the animal body. That the ſyſtem we recommend, ought not to be conſidered as an alteration, but as a reſtoration of affairs to their priſtine and natural ſtate, to their original principles, from which all ſtates, from their neceſſary imperfection will naturally deviate. A government conducted by corruption, is in as unnatural a ſtate, as a branch drawn by force from its natural poſition.—Becauſe it is impoſſible to exclude all imperfection from any ſyſtem of government, ſome ſiniſter perſons would endeavour to perſuade us, that even the greateſt abuſes were neceſſary and unavoidable.—I can compare theſe perſons to none more properly, than to ſuch who charge their own voluntary and acquired depravity

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on the original frailty of their natures. But as man in the one caſe, though naturally imperfect, is not neceſſarily profligate, ſo in the other, though government muſt naturally be liable to ſome abuſe, yet it may very eaſily be ſo conducted as to anſwer very ſufficiently its moſt important ends and uſes.—The objection I have cited, might be equally apply'd to ſuperſede the reformation of any other abuſe whatſoever.—Had the ſame abſurd and timid idea prevailed with our anceſtors, we had ſtill perhaps groaned under the ſevere bondage of tyranny and ſuperſtition. Thoſe who think they find an intereſt in the continuation of abuſe, will naturally be enemies to reformation; but ſurely it is trifling with the common ſenſe of mankind to alledge, that it is prudent to ſubmit to abuſe, becauſe reformation may be irkſome; that things are not bad, becauſe we may be able to con-

ceive worſe; or that the intereſt of a few ſlaves is to be prefered to the vaſt majority of a free people.

2. It is further objected, that luxury, and the love of money, has taken ſuch eſtabliſhed hold of the minds of men, that it is in vain to expect their concurrence, unleſs their private intereſts are gratifyed.

I ſhall firſt obſerve, that all this is mere aſſertion, and downright begging the queſtion, incapable of being ſupported, either by argument or experience. The ſuppoſition is indeed ſo very diſhonourable, that it ought not to be mentioned, but merely with a view to expoſe it. Men are not ſo corrupt and ignorant, as to refuſe due concurrence to meaſures plainly calculated for the intereſt of themſelves and their poſterity, and a good prince would propoſe no other. --No man, to ſpeak properly, has an intereſt diſtinct from the com-

monwealth, as no prince can be truly ſaid to have an intereſt different from his people.—Every man is moſt ſubſtantially benefited both as to his own intereſt, and that of his poſterity, when the community is beſt ſerved.—No man can be ignorant of this, and if a few individuals could be found ſo deſperate, as to diſregard this truth, it is impoſſible that the majority of an auguſt body, the deputies of the people, the eyes of the conſtituents upon them, and liable to be diſſolved at the king's pleaſure, ever ſhould; and we may ſafely venture to appeal to experience, whether the ſalutary propoſals of the prince have not almoſt always found the deſired concurrence. Some little delays may happen, and prejudices for a time intervene; but truth at the laſt forces its way, and no groundleſs oppoſition can be durable or laſting. To adhere to the faction of a miniſter, to the prejudice

judice of the honour, liberty, and happineſs of the community, is an idea only fit for Cappadocians;—impoſſible one ſhould think to be conceived among a free people.—Beſides it may be argued from the very topic of private intereſt, how unavailing the factious oppoſition of a miniſter muſt neceſſarily be.—It is to the power, and not to the perſon of a miniſter that men are attached.—Remove the power, and the cement of miniſterial confederacy is immediately diſſolved.—Conſiderations merely perſonal, would even be ſufficient to deter men from embarking in unprofitable oppoſition.

May we not ſuppoſe, that many perſons, though under private obligation to a miniſter, would by no means hold themſelves obliged to an undiſtinguiſhing complaiſance for every meaſure he might think proper to embrace? No doubt

doubt there are many ſuch, and even they who heretofore knew no other principle, than the deſire of getting, would, upon a change of circumſtances be no leſs influenced by the fear of loſing.—Let private intereſt be ſuppoſed to have its utmoſt weight, might not the prince with much more efficacy turn that ſpring of action to the ſupport of good government, than a miniſter could to uphold the ſyſtem of his own ambition? Might not the prince confer as many favours among his parliament as a miniſter, and that too with leſs jealouſy, as he could have no reaſonable motives of preference, but merit and capacity?

"Not that a wiſe and able prince would need or require an undue complaiſance in parliament, as the proper return for his bounty, or make his favour the price of honour and conſcience;

ſcience; but conferring his graces with due diſcernment, whilſt he benefited the publick eſſentially, he would likewiſe ſtrengthen his hands by many perſonal obligations."

Muſt gratitude be ſuppoſed leſs fervent for the honourable favour of the crown, than for the precarious and intereſted bounty of a miniſter? A ſovereign diſpenſing his favours with due diſcernment, would thereby make both publick ſpirit and private intereſt cooperate in his adminiſtration, and thoſe who were not partakers of the particular bounty of the crown, would in a national ſenſe be benfited by the ſervices done to the community.

Private intereſt might indeed be promoted by thwarting the corrupt ſyſtem of a miniſter, but would meet with certain diſgrace and diſappointment by a peeviſh

peeviſh and groundleſs oppoſition to the ſalutary meaſures of the crown.

The true and infallible expedient for a prince to be effectually ſupported, is to regulate his conduct by the uncorrupted ſuffrages of his people.

Should a few individuals be inclined to abuſe their power and ſell their ſuffrages, yet no purchaſer could be found againſt the declared ſenſe and reſolution of the crown.—An uncorrupted parliament muſt neceſſarily ſecond the laudable intentions of the ſovereign; they will ſurely attend to their own intereſts, which they muſt know to be inſeparably connected with thoſe of the community.—It is plain that private intereſt, ſo far from being ſerved, would in this caſe be certainly ruined by factious contumacy.

If any ſhould be found profligate enough, contrary to all aſſignable mo-

tives of action, to perſevere in wilfull oppoſition, it would be the evident *intereſt* as well as duty of the others to blaſt and ſtigmatize their malicious purpoſes.

3. It is farther objected, that a miniſter by a long poſſeſſion of power and diſtribution of favours, may have created ſuch a ſyſtem of dependance, as to render it almoſt impoſſible to tranſact public buſineſs without his concurrence.

This is the great difficulty with which the advocates for corruption would endeavour to frighten us, but will appear upon enquiry to be altogether chimerical, deſtitute of foundation either in reaſon or truth.

As there can be no motive for abetting the cauſe of a miniſter, but a ſelfiſh private intereſt, when no more recompence could be expected, the attach-

tachment would ceaſe of courſe.—It follows then, that this laſt objection of miniſterial aſſociation, may be reſolved into the preceding one, of private intereſt, and the reaſoning upon that head equally applicable to the point under conſideration.—The reader muſt obſerve, that when a miniſter is entruſted with great power, that it is not to the man, but to his authority that incenſe is paid.—They muſt be very ſhallow politicians, who don't know that it is the *preſent divinity*, that is always worſhiped.—The ſervile tools of power, are of all others the moſt incapable of friendſhip; and as to gratitude they can make no pretence, for that ſuppoſes conſcience: *Nulla fides unquam miſeros reſpexit amicos.* —It were abſurd to the laſt degree to ſuppoſe that a prince could be diſtreſſed, merely becauſe he vindicated his own juſt authority, and relied on the voluntary affections of his ſubjects.

With what ſucceſs could any perſon hope to embarraſs the ſovereign, for doing the moſt popular and acceptable ſervice to the whole nation? For what can be conceived more popular, than to extirpate the vile brood of corruption, and to be in reality the king of his people? But the truth is, in confuting this pretended difficulty, we are fighting a creature of the imagination.—The caſe ſuppoſed, can never exiſt in fact, for no man, who ever enjoyed power, can be ſo ignorant of its effects, as to ſuppoſe he could retain his influence, after he had loſt his authority.

No man could be found abſurd enough to expoſe himſelf by ſuch an attempt, nor does our hiſtory afford a ſingle inſtance of an obnoxious and diſgraced miniſter ever making, or even attempting an obſtruction to public buſineſs.

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We all know, that even delegated power, odiouſly adminiſtered, has met with wonderfull reverence; how then ſhould not ſupreme authority in the firſt inſtance, wiſely and honourably exerted, confound all oppoſition, could any be ſuppoſed?——I have now diſtinctly conſidered all the objections whoſe plauſibility gives them the leaſt pretence to be examined——Others I have heard of, but they are ſo ſilly and frivolous, that they would be ſcarcely pardonable in the mouth of a pretty woman penſioned by a miniſter, and could be admitted with no propriety into ſerious debate.

What honour and happineſs might not that prince juſtly promiſe to himſelf and his people, whoſe example pointed the way to virtue, and whoſe favour inſeparably attended merit?

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A Grand-vizir adminiſtration is always odious to the reſt of the ſubjects, who ſee their eſſential intereſts ſacrificed to maintain a deteſtable ſyſtem of miniſterial bondage.

A prince ſhould carefully diſtinguiſh between oppoſition to a corrupt miniſter, and oppoſition to legal government: — the latter is an idea only for madmen; abſurd in ſpeculation, impoſſible in practice.—Never may a prince be unhappily perſuaded by a profligate ſervant, that an honeſt adminiſtration is an impracticable ſyſtem!

Nothing ſo eaſy, ſo natural, ſo beneficial.——

The great body of the nation would effectually ſupport it, and even the veterans of corruption would be aſhamed to lift up their voice againſt it.—

From

From what topics would it be poſſible to evince its impracticability? —Not from intereſt, for it is the acknowledged intereſt of all to be well governed :—not from honour, for venality can end in nothing, but weakneſs and diſhonour : — not from habit or ignorance, for the great body of the nation has perpetually exclaimed againſt corruption.—It is demonſtrable, there is ſufficient power, and we truſt there will not be wanting virtue and ſpirit ſufficient to eſtabliſh government upon its legal, natural and ſolid foundations.——

Great and innumerable are the evils which enſue, when corruption becomes the governing principle of a ſtate.—It is neceſſarily attended with an univerſal depravation of morals, the ſevereſt evil that can befall any nation.—If ſtates

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are happy in proportion as they are virtuous, it is evident that a ſyſtem of venality muſt equally poiſon their happineſs and weaken their power.—Corruption manifeſtly deſtroys that generous emulation, that ſenſe of honour and virtue, which is the ſource of all great and heroical atchievements.—— Little could be expected from that people, where money was conſidered as the only meaſure of eſteem.—Vice, luxury, extravagance and imbecillity would form the national complexion—As individuals will neceſſarily attend to what they conceive to be their intereſt, it has been the object of all wiſe governments, to make public virtue as much as poſſible the road to private happineſs; but corruption tends to diſunite theſe principles, which good policy ſhould connect as cloſe as poſſible.

Thoſe whoſe minds are debaſed by the ſordid principle of ſelf-indulgence,

will make all conſiderations center in themſelves.—With ſuch their country will be conſidered as an object of plunder, not of regard.—Inſatiable in their deſires, they will be little delicate in the means of gratification, and be ready to ſacrifice all honourable conſiderations to the mean purpoſes of their own illiberality.

It would be the moſt impudent effrontery for any perſon to pretend to ſerve a nation, and at the ſame time to corrupt its virtue, and render the love of money predominant, which is affirmed by the higheſt authority, *to be the root of all evil.*

'Tis the very empiriciſm of politics to imagine that the love of money could ſupply the defects of virtue, ability and public ſpirit.—Money can only be coveted on the motives of avarice and luxury, than which no better expedi-

ents could be found, to debaſe the mind or debilitate the body. The effects of corruption muſt ever be as infamous as the cauſe, and the neceſſary connexion between cauſes and conſeqcences muſt be diſſolved, before national honour and happineſs could be derived from ſo impure a fountain. As a ſyſtem of corruption deſtroys the morals, it ſheds likewiſe the moſt pernicious influence on the genius and literature of a nation.

If talents of every kind are in a good meaſure cultivated in proportion to the eſteem in which they are held, and the intereſt annexed to thoſe purſuits, how diſcouraging to genius muſt a ſyſtem of venality be, that knows no other merit but that of *voting!* What eſteem or what encouragement could the ſons of ſcience hope to receive from a rapacious and money-loving people! Neither virtue or capacity would be conſidered as the road to diſtinction and

emolu-

emolument, but election—power and ſervile proſtitution.—Men of a liberal turn would diſdain to be employed in the vile drudgery of corruption, and folly and infamy would ſhun the torch of letters. Men would naturally decline purſuits which they knew to be unprofitable, and betake themſelves to more thriving occupations.

Let it not be deemed an objection to the inferences we have drawn, that a nation, tho' much enervated by corruption and luxury, may be animated by a miniſter of probity and capacity, into a temporary exertion of ſpirit and ability.

This may very naturally happen, when a nation is not arrived to the laſt degree of profligacy, and the public danger preſſing and immediate. The objection proves nothing againſt the natural bad conſequences of corruption, but on

the contrary diſplays them in the ſtrongeſt colours.—The recovery here ſuppoſed is effected by patriotiſm and public ſpirit, and ſhews the neceſſity of recurring to the true maxims of government.——If the banefull influences of venality had not in ſome degree been counteracted, the nation muſt have well nigh been undone.——It will ſtill remain invariably true, that in proportion as corruption prevails, the ſtrength and vigour of a nation decline.

The recovery of an abandoned people under a wiſe and able adminiſtration, may ſerve further to ſhew, how much it is in the power of governors to model a nation. The political veſſel is no leſs obedient to the ſteerage, than the nautical.

A good government will always make a good people.—A prince of ability may always excite in his ſubjects the ſame

ſame glorious ideas which reign in his own mind. Men will not fail to cultivate thoſe qualities, which the ſovereign is known to encourage and admire. *Regis ad exemplum*, would be one of the moſt ſucceſsful methods of propagating virtue.

The natural reverence for authority, and the expectation of notice and recompence, could not fail to attach people to ſuch principles and purſuits as were recommended by the crown. A ſyſtem of virtue and capacity, enforced by the ſupreme authority, would ſoon be found an over-match for the moſt deſperate efforts of the patrons of venality.

It may be proper here briefly to conſider what would probably be the conduct of a corrupt miniſter, with whom a prince ſhould be unhappily induced to lodge his authority. He would repreſent

ſent to the ſovereign, as diſcontented with the eſtabliſhment, all thoſe who had courage and honeſty ſufficient to oppoſe his wretched adminiſtration.—That is in effect, he would proſcribe a part of the nation, to furniſh himſelf with means to govern the whole.—Under the pretended neceſſity of protecting the prince from imaginary dangers, he would monopolize his authority for the purpoſes of his own ambition.—Diſcontent with meaſures, however well founded it might be, he would not fail to conſtrue into diſaffection, and would thence plead the the neceſſity of multiplying a pecuniary dependence on the crown, in order to create a real dependance on himſelf. The prince would be taught to believe that he was ſurrounded with his enemies, and that the creatures of the miniſter were the janizaries who ſupported the throne.

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A corrupt miniſter would avail himſelf of the odium he excited, and make it a pretence to enlarge his own authority.—Hence the plauſible pretext of vaſt ſupplies, aud numerous forces, and a multiplication and ſubdiviſion of employments beyond the reach of computation.—It is even poſſible that diſcontent from aggravated ill-uſage might ripen into diſaffection, and that perſons from being conſidered as enemies, might really become ſuch; all which miſchief an equal and generous policy might happily have prevented.——

Under a corrupt and venal ſyſtem of government, even the moſt venerable bodies might be aſperſed and calumniated, on the moſt frivolous pretence imaginable.——Was the favour of a prince impartially extended to the deſert of all his ſubjects, the miniſter would

would have leſs to beſtow on the minions and paraſites of his own power.

Should a prince have private intereſts and predilections that interfered with the good of his people, (the only aſſignable motive for not truſting a free parliament) a corrupt miniſter would not fail to flatter thoſe opinions, though at the expence of the honour and welfare of his country. Nay, he would turn thoſe unhappy prejudices of the ſovereign, to the furtherance of his own ambition, and thereby create an unnatural dependance of the prince upon the miniſter.——

When once a corrupt ſervant of the crown, gets poſſeſſion of the power of a ſtate, an ardent deſire to continue and extend that power, will drive him to the moſt ſhameful and ſcandalous expedients to maintain it.—A man who

ſticks

ſticks at no meaſures to acquire power, will ſcruple none to defend it.

A parliament, which is the mouth of the people to repreſent their grievances and opinions, might through corruption be made to ſpeak the language of a miniſter, and vote diſhonour to be dignity, extravagance to be œconomy, vice and ignorance to be virtue and capacity;——in ſhort, to out-vote the common ſenſe, as well as feeling of the community.—The wretched hirelings would not conſider that they were bought with their own money, and that for a preſent morſel they ſold the valuable inheritance of wealth, honour, and ſecurity to themſelves and their poſterity. It is very certain that a nation might be reduced to the verge of deſtruction by a profligate miniſter, without any interruption of the ordinary courſe of juſtice, the internal tranquility, or the pleaſurable amuſements

of the people.—Nay, a corrupt miniſter would be forward to encourage every mode of expenſive debauchery, in order to render men indigent and neceſſitous, and conſequently more dependent on his bounty.—The reader's patience would be exhauſted before a detail of this labyrinth of iniquity could be duly accompliſhed; let it ſuffice to ſay, that the conſequence of ſuch a ſyſtem muſt be vice, ignorance, rapine at home; diſtreſs, contempt, imbecillity abroad.——

I cannot refuſe myſelf the pleaſure of congratulating my country on the pleaſing proſpect of deliverance from miniſterial bondage, that great ſource of national debt, moral depravation and public diſhonour.———The amiable prince who fills the throne, has declared himſelf the enemy of corruption: as he would ſcorn to impoſe, he will likewiſe diſdain to wear the fetters

of

of venality. He will make his miniſters no leſs than their fellow-ſubjects reſpect his authority. He will not lend his name to a faction, or his power to a miniſter, to bring himſelf into a ſtate of diſhonourable dependance. Secure of the affections of the people, by purſuing the common intereſts of the nation, he will not be intimidated with reſignations, or frightened by factious contumacy into diſreputable compliance. He will be ſenſible that it is the miſ-applied favour of the prince, that alone can give ſtrength to the faction of an artful miniſter.—From innumerable examples in both ancient and modern hiſtory, he will not fail to obſerve the great danger and folly of an unlimited complaiſance for any one favourite.——His firmneſs will ſoon ſurmount the obſtacles which ſelfiſh intereſt oppoſes to public happineſs.—He will have no private views to con-

ceal, no ſeparate intereſt to promote. As the public good will be the fixed object of his attention, he will never exert his influence for the protection of infamy, or the palliation of abſurdity.—No errors of opinion, no misfortunes ariſing from accident, to which all ſtates muſt be liable, will ever diſturb the national affection and confidence.—A prince conſcious of his integrity, may always appeal with confidence to his people, nor will they ever fail to repay his generous labours with all poſſible fidelity and gratitude.—He will make the laws the meaſure, and the public happineſs the object of his government.—Above all he will promote to the utmoſt a ſincere, vital ſpirit of religion, as the only ſolid foundation of public and private virtue.———The preſent circumſtances ſeem highly favourable to eſtabliſh a true ſyſtem of policy.—The ſtale pretence of diſaffection is at at end, and at no period was there

there ever more national harmony.—A young prince of the beſt diſpoſitions, revered by the public, diſentangled from ſyſtems, unaccuſtomed to wear the fetters of venality.—We are alſo upon the eve of a new parliament, to the conſtituents of which I would earneſtly recommend, to try for once the effects of a free, uninfluenced repreſentation, remembering that they who are bought, cannot complain with juſtice that they are ſold.—Let then my fellow-citizens with a ſpirit becoming Britons, ſpurn the vile bondage of corruption, and ſecond the noble views of their ſovereign, whoſe glorious ambition, we doubt not, will be to convince the world, that he is *in reality the king of his people.*

F I N I S.